

**APEC Third Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM 3) and Related Meetings  
Committee on Trade and Investment: Business Mobility Group**

**BMG Plenary  
Medan, Monday 24 June 2013  
MINUTES**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Agreed Action/s</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Paragraph Reference</b>
1	United States to consider including international standards in relation to PNR in the Advance Passenger Information Systems TFI work	United States	Before SOM 1 2014	5.7
2	United States, to take the idea of a mechanism being developed for economies, should they wish to seek support for assessment of their existing border capabilities including but not limited to Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record to the TFI Steering Committee and report back to the BMG.	United States	Before SOM 1 2014	5.8
3	Australia to have the communication protocols also placed on the "messages from the chair" part of the APEC website	Australia	August 2013	6.6
4	Economies to provide remaining responses to the 2013 Client Service Framework survey to Canada.	All economies	Before SOM 1 2014	10.6
5	Canada to update report on Client Service Framework survey responses to include any remaining economies' input	Canada	Before SOM 1 2014	10.7
6	Australia to continue to receive any final comments on the proposed updated Legal Infrastructure Standards with a view to their final endorsement at the next SOM	Australia	Before SOM 1 2014	11.9
7	Economies to provide comment intersessionally on the draft Characteristics for Trusted Traveller Programs to the United States	All economies	Before SOM 1 2014	12.10
8	Any further API survey responses from economies to be provided to the United States.	All economies	Before SOM 1 2014	13.12
9	United States to develop best practice/lessons learned document in implementing API Systems (including PNR) for BMG comment, and also include reference to international standards (Chicago Convention, Annex 9) for information	All economies	Before SOM 1 2014	13.13
10	Once views of TFI Steering Committee are known in relation to action item 2 economies to consider progressing this work intersessionally	All economies	Before SOM1 2014	14.16
11	Australia to advance the ABTC Working Group proposal in relation to handling passport changes in the ABTC System intersessionally, ahead of the End to End Review.	Australia, ABTC Working Group	Before SOM1 2014	15.22

12	Australia to advise the BMG intersessionally on the transition of ABTC System servers and to contact economies should important information be required for users of the ABTC System	Australia	Before September 2013	17.4
13	Australia to provide a report intersessionally on the ABTC System outages experiences and any steps taken to improve performance	Australia	Before SOM1 2014	17.5
14	Australia to provide a chronology of the agreement and intersessional discussions to finalise the text to amend the ABTC Operating Framework's transitional membership category to BMG members for their information	Australia	Before September 2013	17.13
15	Peru to seek advice from APEC Secretariat/Australia should Peru wish to propose further changes to the ABTC Operating Framework	Peru		17.14
16	Chair to seek economies' views on elements for an ABTC Program Report intersessionally.	BMG Convenor	Before October 2013	17.17

## **1. Opening Remarks (Chair) (Standing item)**

1.1 The Chair (Ms Agnieszka Holland, Assistant Secretary of Border Security Policy Branch in the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship) welcomed BMG Members and thanked Indonesia for the hospitality and facilities provided as hosts.

1.2 The Chair also took the opportunity to introduce:

- Mr Tuan Tu Ahn - the APEC Secretariat Program Director for the BMG.
- Mr David Dodwell – the APEC Business Advisory Council

1.3 BMG members were then given the opportunity to introduce themselves.

1.4 After introductions from all members, apologies were passed on from Mexico and Brunei who were unable to attend the plenary.

1.5 As a backdrop to the day's discussions, the Chair highlighted developments in relation to international aviation. This included noting the continued growth of air travel within the Asia-Pacific region and the related technical and infrastructure developments which will likely have a profound impact on the air travel market in the region. The Chair also noted the continued importance of economies working collaboratively with industry in achieving positive outcomes in business mobility, in particular, work on international standards in relation to passenger data, including advance passenger information (API), Passenger Name Record (PNR) data and biometrics.

1.6 The Chair then noted the BMG's work following SOM1 in Jakarta and also intersessional work, including:

- continued enhancement of the ABTC Scheme, for example, the agreed client information in relation to lost and stolen ABTCs has now been made available on the BMG website;
- Russia's becoming a full member of the ABTC Scheme on 1 June 2013;
- following agreement at SOM1, the revised text of the ABTC Operating Framework, which changed the transitional membership category, was finalised and an updated copy of the Framework was circulated and made available on the AIMP part of the APEC website;
- Australia's submission, with New Zealand and Thailand as cosponsors, of an APEC Project Concept Note to seek funding for an End to End review of the ABTC Scheme on 16 May 2013.

1.7 The Chair drew to BMG members' attention the recent collaborative work across APEC subfora and groups, including the Emergency Preparedness Working Group; the Travel Facilitation Initiative Steering Council; the Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures; the Counter-Terrorism Taskforce and the Tourism Working Group. The Chair noted the BMG would be kept informed on developments in other forums.

1.8 The Chair then reminded BMG members about the circulation of the BMG agenda papers and the classification protocols with their use and distribution. The Chair also foreshadowed some of the agenda items and work that had been advanced intersessionally. An opportunity to comment on the plenary agenda was provided with no comments raised.

## **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Chair)**

2.1 The Chair introduced the draft minutes from SOM 1 2013 (Jakarta), which had been circulated and updated intersessionally. The Chair provided an opportunity to comment. No comments were raised and the minutes were deemed to be accepted.

### **3. ABAC Report (ABAC)**

- 3.1 An invitation was extended to Mr David Dodwell, Executive Director of the Hong Kong-APEC Trade Policy Group to deliver his remarks.
- 3.2 Mr Dodwell noted that ABAC remains appreciative of the value of the APEC Business Travel Card and has been a continued advocate on ways in which it can be improved, including:
- reducing processing times;
  - extending the validity to five years (would be less a material issue if the processing times were shorter);
  - would be helpful for cardholders to be able to update information (passport changes, name or location changes and so forth) during the life of the card;
  - need for other kinds of travel cards, different categories of cards – potential for a broader travel card;
  - ABTC is part of a broader subset of work under the Travel Facilitation Initiative; ABAC has a keen interest in the TFI.
- 3.3 Mr Dodwell noted that ABAC had been undertaking a survey in relation to the ABTC in May to all ABAC members and staffers and recommended individuals within the business community (approximately 150). ABAC Japan is leading the survey and formal deadline of response has passed. ABAC Japan is reviewing the responses. ABAC will be next meeting after the Medan meetings in Kyoto, which will provide a first cut report on the results of the survey. The full results will be tabled at ABAC4 meeting in Bali in October. As a result, ABAC will not be able to give its full conclusions until that time, but it may be possible to provide some early initial feedback. A copy of the survey questions was provided to economies for information.
- 3.4 Mr Dodwell noted that if there were any additional suggestions for questions to be included from BMG members, this might be able to be accommodated, even if the survey has passed. Australia noted that one outcome from the ABTC Working Group meeting was whether a question could be included in relation to the BMG website (<http://travel.apec.org>) on any feedback that business travellers would have.
- 3.5 Mr Dodwell also noted ABAC's interest in the BMG's proposed APEC Project in relation to the End to End Review of the ABTC Scheme.

### **4. Update from APEC Secretariat (Program Director and Communications and Public Affairs Unit)**

- 4.1 The Chair then invited the BMG Program Director Mr Tu Anh Tuan to deliver his address on key developments in the APEC Secretariat.
- 4.2 Mr Tu Anh Tuan delivered his presentation including an updates on key outcomes of senior officials' and committee meetings, including:
- The Second Senior Officials' Meeting held on 18-19 April 2013 (including its three priorities of: Attaining the Bogor Goals, Sustainable growth with equity; and Promoting connectivity);
  - The Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI)'s two meetings held so far for 2013;
  - The APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and their interest in the extension of the validity period of the APEC Business Travel Card.
- 4.3 Mr Tuan also provided an update on Project Management and the various funding that was available in the upcoming APEC Project sessions 2 and 3. Mr Tuan also provided an update on the BMG's project submitted concept note for the End to End Review of the ABTC Scheme and key dates ahead, should the concept note be approved.

- 4.4 Mr Tuan also provided background on the APEC Project process generally and contact details for further assistance and information.
- 5. Update on the APEC Travel Facilitation Initiative (TFI Steering Council / United States)**
- 5.1 The Chair then invited the United States to provide an update on the APEC Travel Facilitation Initiative.
- 5.2 The United States reminded the BMG on the background to the TFI and the Steering Council's composition. The United States noted the six key parts of the TFI and provided updates on recent developments on these: Airport Partnership; APEC Business Travel Card; Trusted Traveller; Facilitation of Air Passengers' Security Screening; Advance Passenger Information Systems and Checked Baggage Facilitation.
- 5.3 The BMG is leading or participating in the following three: APEC Business Travel Card, Trusted Traveller, and Advance Passenger Information Systems.
- 5.3 The Chair invited comments. Australia thanked the United States for their work and noted the particular interest of the BMG on issues in relation to passenger data and advised that the BMG would likely be interested in updates interessionally as the cross-cutting work of the TFI progresses.
- 5.4 Thailand also thanked the United States for their work on the TFI and noted the issue of passenger data was also of interest – not just advance passenger information (API), but also Passenger Name Record (PNR) data. Thailand noted the international standardisation around these was important, particularly PNR, and as a result could be included in TFI work on the Advance Passenger Information Systems.
- 5.5 New Zealand also thanked the United States, and noted there might be an opportunity within the TFI for capacity building – with a view for an economy to be able to seek expertise or knowledge from a subject matter expert to assist in developing their border management strategies in the future. Australia echoed New Zealand's comments and welcomed further thought on opportunities for capability building and information exchange that could be a practical next step of the TFI.
- 5.6 The United States thanked economies for their ideas and agreed to take these ideas to the TFI Steering Committee for consideration.
- 5.7 **Action Item:** United States to consider including international standards in relation to PNR in the Advance Passenger Systems TFI work.
- 5.8 **Action Item:** United States, with the assistance of the APEC Secretariat, to take the idea of a border capability mechanism being developed for economies, should they wish to, to seek support for assessment of their existing border capabilities including but not limited to Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record to the TFI Steering Committee and report back to the BMG.
- 6. "Enhancing the ABTC" Working Group Report (Australia)**
- 6.1 The Chair then invited Australia to provide an update on the Enhancing the ABTC Working Group outcomes.
- 6.2 Australia outlined the discussion and outcomes from the Working Group meeting earlier in the week:
- Following the finalisation of the communication protocols for management important issues related to the processing of ABTC applications, the ABTC Working Group noted that these were now available on APEC meeting website. The ABTC Working Group also agreed that the suggestion of the protocols also being saved to the "message from the chair" section of the APEC website be put to the BMG plenary for agreement.
  - Canada provided an update on the Client Service Framework Survey for 2013 and Canada will report later on this at item 10.

- The Working Group also noted a presentation on reporting functionality in the ABTC System. Economies commented on the usefulness of this presentation and raised the issue of opportunities for training to be made available online or through a video to share with relevant colleagues within an economy and facilitate any transitions. It was agreed that the APEC Secretariat would look into this further with the communications team, including the possibility of a ‘webinar’ arrangement or other online tool.
  - Given the importance of program reporting, it was agreed that Australia and Canada would work intersessionally on a possible inclusion to the Client Service Framework. The Working Group also agreed that Australia could provide a sample/mock program report to economies which may assist other economies in developing or enhancing their internal program reports.
  - The Working Group also discussed possible new functionality for the ABTC System to better manage passport changes of ABTC holders. The Group noted the functionality and agreed to consider it more detail intersessionally. It was also agreed that passport changes being actioned would need to be processed quickly and as a result there should be consideration around service standards for these changes. It had been noted previously that the issue of handling passport changes was linked to the extending the validity of the ABTC proposal, which will be discussed further at item 15.
  - The Group also agreed that Malaysia would conduct a survey around ABTC System interactivity and integration challenges with other systems in economies. For example, some economies work with chambers of commerce and other organisations in their processing.
  - The Group also agreed that the proposed APEC Project (End to End Business Process Review of ABTC Scheme) should also include the issue of system integration and usability of the ABTC System. The Group also noted that the project scope could also consider the handling passport change proposal.
  - The Group agreed to Thailand together with Australia drafting a survey to note economies’ policy and regulatory arrangements in terms of visas for ABTC holders; including:
    - whether private visits are permitted or whether another visa is required;
    - visa stay arrangements (while the Operating Framework provides a two to three month stay, there are differences between economies around visa length and rules around repeated stays over a year period);
    - difference between information required from applications in an ABTC application and the information requested in a standard business visa to compare the different circumstances on when a visa may still be current but the card has expired.
- 6.3 The Chair confirmed that the BMG was to note the update in relation to the Client Service Framework and further discussion at item 10; and in relation to the extension of the validity of the ABTC which will be at item 15.
- 6.4 The Chair invited Australia to provide some further background on the history of the communication protocols before asking the BMG to consider the Working Group’s recommendation that BMG agree that the communication protocols be also saved on the “messages from the chair” section of the AIMP part (available to officials only) of the APEC website. It was agreed.
- 6.5 In summary, Australia also foreshadowed the three key items that the ABTC Working Group will consider intersessionally and then expected to be put to the BMG plenary at the next SOM in 2014:
- program reporting; including the possible new Client Service Framework Standard;
  - Malaysian-led survey in relation to ABTC System integration/interaction with other systems;
  - Thailand-led survey in relation to visa regulatory and policy arrangements and how they relate to ABTC holders.

- 6.6 **Action item:** Australia to have the communication protocols also placed on the “messages from the chair” part of the APEC website.
- 7. RMAS Management Board Report (New Zealand)**
- 7.1 The Chair then invited New Zealand to provide an update on the RMAS Management Board Meeting, which was also held on Saturday 22 June 2013, following the ABTC Working Group.
- 7.2 New Zealand reminded the BMG on the composition of the RMAS Management Board and noted the interest in RMAS went well beyond the three economies (Australia, New Zealand and the United States) currently using RMAS.
- 7.3 New Zealand noted the Board discussed the following key items:
- an update on the web-service pilot to move the RMAS system on a web-based platform to make it more flexible and cost-effective for economies. The MOU between Australia and the Philippines to underpin the pilot was almost completed and expected to be signed in early July;
  - an update on New Zealand and United States MOU regarding positive validation;
  - the future vision of RMAS in the international border context and its role in a change border environment.
- 7.4 New Zealand also noted some of the key points of agreement within the Board coming out of the discussion of this last item on the future of RMAS:
- the value of real-time checks of travel documents in a border setting where time is critical;
  - how RMAS improves the security of the passport, reducing the opportunities for passport fraud, as economies can check directly with the issuing authority rather than solely relying on verification of the physical document;
  - the true value of RMAS will come from the increased take up of RMAS from additional economies.
  - Importance to bring the cost of using RMAS down – web-service trial is important in this respect
- 7.5 New Zealand also noted that it was discussed that the RMAS Management Board should consider interessionally how RMAS could be used by economies who do not currently have an interactive advance passenger information system (used at airline check-in) and whether there might be a ‘modular’ system that could be considered.
- 7.6 The Chair invited New Zealand to provide some background to the issue of privacy, noting this was an important issues many economies need to consider when using a new system, such as RMAS. New Zealand advised that RMAS had been developed with privacy in mind and is a ‘one-to-one’ check, which sends a message to the passport issuing authority at check-in to check against the issuing authority’s records. The response is simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in terms of whether that is valid passport. As a result, RMAS does not disclose any further details of an individual, other than the validity of the passport presented. From a privacy point of view, it is a far better solution than enabling other economies having broader access to passport records.
- 7.7 The Chair noted the potential of RMAS if more economies were to join and the benefits that could flow to the region.
- 7.8 The Philippines noted some of the RMAS technology and its privacy benefits.
- 7.9 Malaysia noted its passport / identification sharing arrangements with Singapore, but expressed its interest in RMAS and the web-service pilot.
- 7.10 Australia thanked New Zealand for its update and confirmed that Australia and the Philippines would be pleased to provide updates on the pilot and its benefits to the RMAS Management

Board and also to the plenary and welcomes interest from other economies who may also be interested in exploring such an arrangement.

- 7.11 The Chair invited New Zealand to provide a presentation to the BMG on RMAS generally and its potential applications in the future, including the ideas around a 'perimeter' arrangement and a modular system.
- 7.12 New Zealand provided a presentation on an overview of RMAS for the information of the BMG, noting its principal objective: strengthen the collective capacity of participating APEC economies to detect lost, stolen and otherwise invalid documents.
- 7.13 The presentation noted the current participating economies, the history of the Scheme and some key statistics on invalid documents detected by New Zealand and how that has assisted Immigration New Zealand in preventing the boarding of those travellers to New Zealand. The presentation also looked at some of the statistics for Australia and the United States and the volume of transactions handled by RMAS.
- 7.14 The presentation also looked at the differences between negative and positive validation. New Zealand noted that positive validation not only checks whether a passport is recorded as lost or stolen, but it also confirms that a particular passport is a legitimate passport that has been issued by the passport issuing authority. The presentation also noted the INTERPOL lost and stolen database and the differences in the way in which an economy can get a response from an issuing authority through INTERPOL, which can sometimes be quick but other times much longer. New Zealand noted that this contrasted with the speed (real-time) and user-friendly nature of RMAS, which is invaluable in a border context where timeliness is critical.
- 7.15 The presentation noted the key benefits of RMAS:
- greater security;
  - business as usual for airlines;
  - assists airlines in getting a real-time confirmation of a traveller's authority to travel to a particular economy;
  - does not pose privacy issues – one-to-one check, not an exchange of information;
  - data is up to date (accessed directly from the passport issuing authority) – some lost and stolen document databases may not always be current;
  - not just a technical solution, but a solution designed for the border environment to assist airlines and immigration authorities in facilitating legitimate travel
- 7.16 The Chair thanked New Zealand and invited questions. Canada queried whether INTERPOL also had functionality to check directly with the passport issuing authority like RMAS – New Zealand confirmed that INTERPOL database only included a list of lost and stolen documents and did not perform a real-time check with the issuing authority, as a follow up query with the issuing authority is required, which can be quick or slow.
- 7.17 Malaysia noted some of the benefits of RMAS, including its business as usual applications. Malaysia queried whether RMAS could also facilitate or speed up the process of clearance on arrival in an economy. New Zealand noted that RMAS is designed to give an economy the confidence to streamline its processes – RMAS tells you there and then whether a passport is valid and legitimately issued – directly from the passport issuing authority. This enables a border authority at the primary line (physical border) to focus on other matters of concern and, perhaps, identify those passengers who may warrant automated border clearance. Collectively, RMAS is an additional risk-management tool in relation to the credentials of a passenger and can certainly assist in improving clearance processes.
- 7.18 The Chair invited economies if they had further questions to contact New Zealand intersessionally.



## **8. Transitional Members' Reports (Canada and United States)**

- 8.1 The Chair reminded economies of the agreement at SOM1 to amend the ABTC Operating Framework in relation to the transitional membership category and the work intersessionally to finalise the exact text of these changes. This change gave greater certainty to transitional members to assist in their internal efforts to secure the necessary investments to become full members. As per the amended Framework, transitional members are to report in their progress towards full membership at BMG meetings at least once a year.
- 8.2 The Chair invited Canada and the United States to present their Transitional Members Reports.
- 8.3 **Canada:** noted that it continues to progress its domestic ABTC pilot for Canadian citizens. In order to qualify for the program, applicants will need to be Canadian citizens, a member of NEXUS (trusted traveller program), and meet the ABTC requirements of a business traveller. By requiring applicants to be a NEXUS member, ensures that Canadian pilot participants have been assessed against Canada's immigration, customs and enforcement databases. For Canadians to apply, they would use the existing NEXUS online membership site. Once approved, Canadian ABTC members would benefit from having access to the ABTC lanes in airports in the region, similar to the benefits Canada currently offers existing ABTC holders travelling to Canada. Once the system impacts have been completed, Canada will be looking at an implementation date. It is planned that the cards will be printed by the United States as is done for NEXUS cards currently. For the pilot, Canada will use its existing regulatory framework and is presently working on its privacy impact analysis and system impact statements.
- 8.4 Canada also advised that the Government of Canada recently announced that primary responsibility for Passport Canada (Canada's passport issuing authority) will move from their Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) as of 2 July 2013.
- 8.5 **United States:** noted that it continues to work towards issuing ABTCs to eligible US citizens. The United States advised that US Customs and Border Protection will be the agency responsible for issuing the cards. Certain system changes will be required to allow for online lodgement/application and data transfer.
- 8.6 United States will continue to offer ABTC holders expedited visa interviews at US embassies and consulates and access to facilitation lanes at US international airports.
- 8.7 The Chair invited questions or comments.
- 8.8 Peru enquired as to the status of the Transitional Membership category update in the ABTC Operating Framework, noting the agreement at SOM1 and asked what the conclusion of the comments were intersessionally on the circulated text.
- 8.8 The Chair confirmed that the text of the changes to the ABTC Operating Framework had been circulated and agreed intersessionally and proposed that the finalised text also be distributed in hard copies for economies and any remaining questions on the text be discussed in other business later during the plenary. The Chair noted the text of the amended ABTC Operating Framework was also available on the APEC meeting documents website.

## **9. Economy Reports (All members)**

### **9.1 Australia:**

- Australia reported that it had issued 7,395 ABTCs (from January to May 2013 inclusive). This year, following a range of staffing and processing improvements in Australia's ABTC processing team, Australia noted it had dramatically improved its processing times. For example, the average processing time for home applicants was just 18 days in May 2013 and the average for this year (to June 2013) is 22 days. This represented a significant improvement on the 41 day figure Australia reported at the last SOM.
- Additionally, Australia noted its foreign pre-clearance processing times had also improved. The average processing time in May 2013 was just 19 days and the average for this year (to June

2013) is now down to 40 days. Australia noted this was a very important improvement from the 68 day figure reported at the last SOM.

- Australia recalled that at SOM1 in Jakarta, they advised that Australia was undergoing a visa simplification and regulation process. Australia has now successfully implemented the changes which came into effect on 23 March 2013. The change resulted in the visa that Australia currently uses for ABTC holders being changed from the subclass 456 to the subclass 600 visa. No changes have been made that will affect the ability for an ABTC holder to visit Australia for business purposes.
- In other developments, Australia noted that the Australian Prime Minister announced in April 2013 that Australia will move towards facilitated border clearance for the growing number of Chinese tourists and business travellers through an initial pilot to make SmartGate (Australia's automated border clearance system) open to Chinese e-Passport holders.

#### 9.2 **Chile:**

- Chile noted its border capabilities and systems, specifically its unique identity number issued to citizens. Chile also noted the improvements to its security measures in relation to border security. Chile also advised on its automated border clearance trial and that results would be available from it shortly (in late 2013 or early 2014).
- Chile also noted that in terms of home economy processing, there were 2,010 cards issued during the reporting period, a 25% increase. Chile advised that the number of active cards at the end of the reporting period was 1,009, which was a 53% increase. Chile also noted that the number applications approved were 173.

#### 9.3 **China:**

- To 1 June 2013, China advised that it had approved accumulatively 279 413 foreign pre-clearance applications and accepted more than 25 000 applications from Chinese citizens. This year, China has approved 41 145 foreign pre-clearance requests and accepted 9,440 applications of Chinese citizens.
- China noted that the Chinese Government attaches great importance to the management and client service of the ABTC Scheme and as a result is working on an online lodgement and approval system and seeking comments from stakeholders. China hopes the system will be in use by the end of the year.
- China also passed its thanks from the Chinese Government for its appreciation of the assistance and cooperation of other economies in the ABTC Scheme and at the same time hopes that each economy can improve its processing times and strictly verify the qualification of an applicant.
- China also welcomed suggestions, experiences, and comments from other economies as it prepares for its host year of APEC in 2014.

#### 9.4 **Hong Kong, China:**

- In 2012, Hong Kong, China has received 6,412 home applications for ABTC and 40,662 requests for foreign pre-clearance. In the first five months of this year, Hong Kong, China has received 3,219 home applications and 16,606 foreign pre-clearance requests, the majority of which were processed within the timeframes set out in the ABTC Operating Framework.

#### 9.5 **Indonesia:**

- Indonesia advised that from January to June 2013, it had issued 750 cards; there were currently 2,356 active card holders; and 19 000 foreign pre-clearance requests were received.
- Indonesia is expanding its automated border control system beyond Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport to other airports, including Bali.

- Indonesia also advised that it was introducing its new passport booklet as of this month, which will no longer have the authority official's signature.

#### 9.6 **Japan**

- Japan has launched the new residency management system since July 9, 2012, and foreign nationals staying in Japan with the status of residence under the Immigration Control Act and organizations accepting those residents are required to submit a notification to Immigration authorities when a certain change such as termination of an employment contract occurs. For further customer service, on June 24, Japanese Immigration Bureau newly introduced the electronic notification system which they can notify the change online by free of charge at any time.
- The number of issuance of ABTC in the fiscal year 2012 is 2,195. The number of issuance has been increasing rapidly, especially since the fiscal year 2010 (1,567 cards) when Japan hosted APEC related meetings

#### 9.7 **Korea**

- Korea noted its plans working with Hong Kong on its trusted traveller program. They plan on concluding an MOU between the economies in July. Korea and Hong Kong are also looking at facilitating these travellers through an automated border clearance system.
- Consistent with the ABTC Operating Framework to promote trade and investment, Korea will amend its regulations to expand ABTC eligibility to cover small and medium business people in the second half of the year.

#### 9.8 **Malaysia**

- Malaysia is working to improve its visa application processes and the information collected from applicants.
- Malaysia advised that its home economy processing is 7 days.
- Malaysia is working hard to expand and improve its border systems, including biometric verification as well as its visa application processes in certain economies.
- Malaysia noted that it is issuing 5 year multiple entry visa for ABTC holders.
- Malaysia also noted its efforts to improve its border clearance processing times to within 10 minutes of queuing time.

#### 9.9 **New Zealand**

- In anticipation of the End to End Review of the ABTC Scheme, New Zealand noted it had been considering the Scheme and potential improvements internally. New Zealand currently processes 1,100 foreign pre-clearances per week, 500 from those are from what New Zealand describes as 'visa required' countries. On average, it takes 12 minutes for each pre-clearance applicant. Of those pre-clearances approved, only 1.5% travel to New Zealand. For those 'visa free' countries, their pre-clearances take 30 minutes per week on average.
- In terms of delays, the main issue for New Zealand is data entry, so there may be opportunities to streamline that process. Additionally, New Zealand has received approval to increase its resourcing for the ABTC process, which should improve processing times further.
- New Zealand is also looking to improve the criminal checking for New Zealand applicants, which will be brought in shortly and should improve home economy processing.
- On border matters generally, Immigration New Zealand is being restructured and a new enterprise-wide immigration system is being introduced progressively to replace the current system. The new system will have an emphasis on online processing – this will start with student visas.

- New Zealand will also start collecting biometrics as part of some of its visa application processes.
- New Zealand has also introduced 34 visa application centres – third party providers accepting applications on Immigration New Zealand's behalf, which will allow New Zealand to reduce its offshore immigration presence.

#### 9.10 **Papua New Guinea**

- Papua New Guinea advised that their representatives today were from the Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry and would not be able to provide a status report from their immigration colleagues at this meeting but undertook to provide one at the next BMG meeting.

#### 9.11 **Peru**

- Peru advised that the Directorate-General of Immigration has become an autonomous institution in Peru since SOM1 and this will assist in continuing to enhance Peru's ABTC standards.

#### 9.12 **Philippines**

- Philippines advised that they are in the final stages of finalising the framework to enhance their ABTC process.
- Philippines also noted its cooperation with Australia in the development of the web-service pilot for RMAS, as discussed earlier in the meeting.
- In relation to border management, Philippines advised that they have conducted two training sessions in Manila and Davao hosted by the Australian Government.
- The Philippines also advised that they have signed an MOU with the Philippines Coastguard to monitor the entry and exit of transnational organised criminals continue programs, consistent with wider efforts to enhance border security.
- The Philippines also noted its cooperation with Indonesia on programs in relation to the registration of foreigners in certain parts of the Philippines.

#### 9.13 **Russian Federation**

- Russia thanked all economies for their support in Jakarta in the commencement of Russian full membership of the ABTC Scheme from 1 June 2013.
- Russia advised that since becoming a full member, it had received 1,820 foreign pre-clearance requests and 895 of those have already been approved for Russian pre-clearance.
- Russia noted that there had been a question of other economies in terms of existing cardholders requesting Russian pre-clearance. Russia advised that the best way to request this for an individual cardholder would be to send an email to Russia, advising of the cardholder in question.
- Russia advised that they have received their first home economy application. They have also been working with stakeholders to explain the eligibility criteria for the card (business traveller, no criminal convictions and so on). Russia also advised that under their legislation, they would not charge a fee to Russian applicants.

#### 9.14 **Singapore**

- Singapore advised that in the first five months of this year, Singapore had issued nearly 3 400 ABTCs.

- Singapore also advised that it regretted to report that its foreign pre-clearance processing times had increased, largely due to the performance issues of the ABTC System given some of the system down time.

#### 9.15 Chinese Taipei

- Chinese Taipei advised that to May 2013, it had issued 5,387 ABTCs. Chinese Taipei also advised that it completes its foreign pre-clearance processing within service standards, approximately three weeks.
- Chinese Taipei also noted that it had implemented online visa lodgement.
- Chinese Taipei also advised that it had established its API system at the end of July 2011 and the trial commenced from 1 September 2012 of its interactive API system.
- Chinese Taipei also noted that it is including biometric verification in its border processes from 2014.
- Chinese Taipei also updated the group on its Automated Border Control System (ABCS), introduced from 1 September 2011, which facilitates low-risk travellers' entry by using facial recognition. Chinese Taipei advised that it would also be looking at ABTC holders being able to apply to use the ABCS soon.

#### 9.16 Thailand

- Thailand advised that in terms of home economy ABTC processing for the reporting period (February to middle of June 2013), there were 1,777 applications, which was a 20% increase. The number of active cards at the end of the reporting period was 9 731, which was a 27% increase on last year. The average processing time for home economy applicants was 9 days.
- Thailand also advised that in terms of foreign pre-clearance processing, Thailand had received 20 070 pre-clearance requests, which was a 1% increase and there was an average processing times of 22 days.
- In relation Thai border security and air passengers, Thailand advised that from the beginning of the year to present, there are nearly 6,000 ABTC holders arriving at Suvarnabhumi airport, the majority are from Australia (more than 1,600), Singapore (more than 1,200), China (more than 500), followed by Indonesia (more than 300).
- Thailand updated in relation to its ABCS. Since introducing 16 terminals for both arrivals and departures at Suvarnabhumi airport, between January and June 2013, 3.5 Million Thai passengers have utilised the service. The service will be expanded. Thailand will soon allow ABTCs to enrol to use this service.

#### 9.17 Vietnam

- Vietnam advised it is currently operating inside of the agreed processing timeframes, but noted that not all economies were currently meeting the service standards with some extended delays. Vietnam encouraged all economies to meet the service standards as provided in the Operating Framework.
- Vietnam asked that economies consider being more specific with pre-clearance applicants in terms of their employment category.

9.18 The Chair thanked economies for their updates and their ongoing efforts and cooperation in the ABTC Scheme. The Chair noted the comments in relation to ABTC System availability and recommend that this important issue be discussed further in other business.

9.19 The Chair also noted the comments in relation to processing times and service standards and noted that the issue of program reporting is something that can seek to address these concerns and also could be discussed further in other business.

## **10. Implementation of the Client Service Framework (Canada)**

- 10.1 The Chair invited Canada to present on the 2013 Client Service Feedback survey outcomes, from the ABTC Working Group.
- 10.2 Canada provided background on the implementation of the Client Service Framework review and went into detail on the 2013 review. In 2013, 11 economies have provided input to the survey to date, with some additional input to be included shortly.
- 10.3 Canada noted that they survey indicated that Chinese Taipei appears to have made significant progress since the last survey in 2012, while all other responding economies have either implemented most or continue to progress in their implementation of the standards.
- 10.4 Canada encouraged other economies to provide their input to the survey intersessionally throughout 2013 and that Canada will continue to accept input from economies and update the 2013 report accordingly.
- 10.5 Following the ABTC Working Group meeting, Canada also advised that it had agreed to coordinate three items in relation to the Client Service Framework:
  1. seek intersessional comment from economies as to what type of assistance they would like to receive, if any, to assist in their implementing the full standards in the Client Service Framework;
  2. seek economies' views as to the potential addition of systematic program reporting on elements within the Client Service Framework, as this could be seen as best practice in terms of program management; and
  3. seek views intersessionally in terms of what could be appropriate service standards as part of the proposed enhancement of actioning passport changes in the ABTC System
- 10.6 Action item: economies to provide remaining responses to the 2013 Client Service Framework survey to Canada.
- 10.7 Action item: Canada to update report on Client Service Framework survey responses to include any remaining economies' input.
- 10.8 The Chair invited comment. Vietnam advised that there was a slight change in relation to Vietnam's response in terms of renewals and handling passport changes of ABTC holders in Vietnam.
- 10.9 The Chair thanked Canada and noted the importance of the upcoming intersessional work, in particular the importance of program reporting in the management of an economy's participation in the ABTC Scheme.

## **11. Legal Infrastructure Standards (Australia)**

- 11.1 The Chair provided background to the introduction of the Legal Infrastructure Standards in 2004 and the decision in 2012 to undertake a review of the Standards to confirm their relevance and identify any new standards for inclusion. The Chair then invited Australia to present on this agenda item.
- 11.2 Australia noted that during 2012 and 2013, Australia sought comments from economies on the Legal Infrastructure Standards to review whether they remained relevant and appropriate and whether there were any additional standards that should be added to meet the immigration and border challenges of today. Australia advised that in 2012, the majority of economies provided comment on the legal infrastructure standards self-assessment checklist and that in 2013, BMG members were given the opportunity to comment on the full legal infrastructure standards.
- 11.3 Australia noted that six economies responded to the intersessional review since the last SOM, noting that there were a number of style and tone changes suggested. Australia also noted that there was also some new input in relation to carrier compliance; API terminology; provisions for biometric capture; clarification on terminology for fraudulent/falsified travel documents; provision for combating criminality as well as international terrorism.

- 11.4 Australia recommended that the BMG note the work undertaken intersessionally on updating the standards and that the BMG endorse the proposed new standards. Australia confirmed that the updated standards were circulated intersessionally and made available on the APEC meeting documents website (AIMP).
- 11.5 Given the dynamic nature of the border and immigration environment, Australia also recommended that the Standards again be reviewed in two years' time. Australia noted that it was also suggested at the ABTC Working Group meeting about whether there should also be a standard in the future in relation to visa regulatory arrangements for ABTC holders, which could be considered next time the standards are updated. By then, economies will likely have agreed to best practice in this regard given the Thailand and Australian survey.
- 11.6 The Chair invited comments. The United States thanked Australia for the review and noted that the proposed updated standards did cover much of the work the BMG is advancing, but given the importance of the document, the United States asked that the final version be considered intersessionally before final endorsement.
- 11.7 Australia advised that it would welcome any further and final comments intersessionally on the standards.
- 11.8 The Chair asked therefore that the BMG note progress on this item and that further intersessionally work will take place with a decision to be made at the next SOM.
- 11.9 Action item: Australia to continue to receive any final comments on the proposed updated Legal Infrastructure Standards with a view to their final endorsement at the next SOM.

## **12. Trusted Traveller Programs (United States)**

- 12.1 The Chair provided background to the Trusted Traveller Program. The APEC Travel Facilitation Initiative (TFI), which was endorsed by senior officials in 2011, outlined a number of different elements for APEC sub-fora to work on to facilitate air travel in the region.
- 12.2 One of these elements related to trusted traveller programs and, specifically, to developing a consensus within APEC on the key characteristics of a trusted traveller program.
- 12.3 At the last SOM, the United States presented a briefing and summary of the results of the trusted traveller survey circulated in August 2012.
- 12.4 The Chair invited the United States to provide an update.
- 12.5 The United States provided a briefing and summary of the Trusted Traveller Program work to date, noting that the project proposal and accompanying questionnaire was endorsed by the BMG previously. The United States presented the first draft of the Characteristics for Trusted Traveller Programs, which was developed based on economies' responses to the survey.
- 12.6 The United States noted that the paper was set out into four sections:
1. Trusted traveller programs;
  2. Characteristics of a trusted traveller program;
  3. Information sharing; and
  4. Facilitation benefits
- 12.7 The United States advised that the document seeks to create an APEC consensus on characteristics of trusted traveller programs and could provide the foundation of future work within APEC as part of the TFI. The United States invited any initial comments and feedback on the draft document or otherwise intersessional comment.
- 12.8 Australia thanked the United States for their work on this important item under the TFI and noted Australia looked forward to providing comments intersessionally on the draft characteristics. Australia also noted, in passing, that Australia's trusted traveller-style arrangements (ABTC Scheme and SmartGate, Australia's Automated Border Control System) did not necessarily match the draft characteristics perfectly and would consider some suggestions in this regard.

12.9 Japan passed its congratulations in relation to the Global Entry Program. Japan noted that last year, Japan and the United States agreed to facilitate immigration border control for low-risk travellers between two countries by such means as participation to US Global Entry Program. Japan is now considering the possibility of introducing a system for low-risk travellers to allow them to use automated gates.

12.10 Action item: Economies to provide comment intersessionally on the draft Characteristics for Trusted Traveller Programs to the United States.

### **13. Advance Passenger Information (United States)**

13.1 The Chair introduced the API program, noting that another element of work under the APEC Travel Facilitation Initiative relates to the use of advance passenger information (API) to expedite the processing of legitimate travellers through ports of entry and allow border officials to focus on those requiring additional scrutiny.

13.2 The Chair noted that at SOM1 in Jakarta this year, the BMG endorsed the United States project proposal and questionnaire. The Chair noted that the questionnaire was circulated on 14 March 2013 for economy responses. The Chair invited the United States to present the results of the survey and outline next steps.

13.3 The United States noted that the BMG is leading the API work under the TFI. The API initiative builds upon the previous work of the BMG and seeks to document the challenges economies faced and lessons learned by economies in implementing API systems.

13.4 The United States thanked economies for their responses to the questionnaire intersessionally and provided an overview of those responses. The majority of responses received were from economies who had already implemented API or PNR systems. All those who responded, advised that they required the information from air carriers. Two thirds responded that they required the information from sea vessels. The majority of responses required API for departing passengers. All the respondents have legislation that requires carriers to supply API/PNR information. Further, the respondents have also implemented penalty/enforcement provisions for those carriers who do not provide the information. For the respondents who have implemented API/PNR, the majority have either legislation or regulations to establish API/PNR systems. Almost all the respondents who have implemented API/PNR systems have used government funding for implementation, while one had used a user-pays system, where passengers pay for use.

13.5 In terms of challenges, the United States noted the most respondents cited airline compliance, data elements, privacy and IT matters as key challenges.

13.6 The United States welcomed any further input to the survey. In terms of next steps, the United States intends to develop a best practice and lessons learned document and then a possible workshop on API development.

13.7 Peru enquired as to whether the best practice document would be for TFI or BMG. The United States confirmed the document would be endorsed by TFI and circulated within BMG.

13.8 Japan noted it had provided its input late and it had not yet been included in the response summary. Japan noted it had introduced its API system in 2005 which initially was on a cooperation basis, with airlines not being required to report, and then revised relevant laws to require airlines to report passenger information from 2007.

13.9 Thailand thanked the United States for this valuable information, noting Thailand was like many economies who were in the processing of developing their API and PNR systems and looks forward to the best practice document. Thailand reiterated its earlier suggestion that the best practice document also include information on challenges/lessons learned in implementing PNR systems.

13.10 The Chair also asked whether it would also be useful for economies to have a reference point of the international standards (Chicago Convention, Annex 9) in relation to PNR standards and API principles.



- 13.11 Peru enquired into timeframes for responses and the United States advised that it would want to work expeditiously on this work but at the same time ensure that all economies have a chance to respond. The Chair also noted that some of this information in terms of passenger data may be useful to have ready should the BMG participate in the Travel Facilitation Dialogue proposed by the Tourism Working Group for October.
- 13.12 Action item: any further survey responses from economies to be provided intersessionally to the United States.
- 13.13 Action item: United States to intersessionally develop best practice/lessons learned document in implementing API Systems (including PNR) for BMG comment, and also include reference to international standards (Chicago Convention, Annex 9) for information.

#### **14. Border Capabilities Model**

- 14.1 The Chair recalled that last year the BMG agreed to the final version of the APEC Best Practice Border Capabilities Model for Air Travel in the APEC Region. The Chair noted that at SOM1 this year, the BMG agreed to its goals for 2013, which included, following finalisation of the air travel mode, continuing work to promote self-assessment, capacity building and information sharing. The Chair noted that this is an important piece of work for various border agencies in economies.
- 14.2 The Chair noted that the next steps for the model were important and opened discussion for a strategic discussion on the Model.
- 14.3 Peru noted that there may be opportunities to draw experience from other APEC subfora, including the Electronic Commerce Steering Group (ECSG), who have a capacity building procedure, which have capacity building on several issues. Peru noted that those capacity building projects are based on individual necessities rather than a bloc approach, given the differences between economies and their structures and this should be in mind when considering next steps for border capabilities building.
- 14.4 Australia echoed Peru's comments and noted that the BMG would recognise the significant amount of work that has gone into developing the Border Capabilities Model and noted that one of the things the model may benefit from now is consideration around whether there could be guiding principles in addition to actual capabilities around border best practice.
- 14.5 Australia also noted the earlier agreement agenda item 5 on the Travel Facilitation Initiative was relevant. There was agreement that United States would take comments on practical next steps in relation to Trusted Traveller Programs, API and other border capabilities to the TFI Steering Council. This includes ideas around practical next steps for a mechanism for economies to perform self-assessments or seek expertise to consider the model in an economy.
- 14.6 Malaysia noted that the past discussion for the Model was in relation to Air Travel was very useful for Malaysia to implement best practice. Malaysia also noted that for many APEC economies, air travel is not necessarily the main border channel – given many economies had significant sea and land borders and as a result the development of a Best Practice Model for Sea or Land Travel could be useful.
- 14.7 New Zealand also noted that there was an opportunity here to leverage the knowledge and experience of the various APEC economies in border management. New Zealand also recalled the earlier agreement today in relation to next steps being considered as part of the TFI, and the point that as far as capacity building goes, there is a lot of experience that sits within APEC that could be tapped into for the benefit of individual economies, which could also be a cost-effective resource within APEC.
- 14.8 The Chair thanked economies for their useful comments and noted that they did indeed relate back to our discussion at item 5 and the agreement for the United States to consider with the TFI Steering Committee whether the TFI is an appropriate place to consider next steps for border capability building or whether it would be a separate project. Nonetheless, the Chair noted that it would be complex but valuable work for all member economies. The Chair also noted the interest of expanding the work to Land and Sea, which could be considered intersessionally.

- 14.9 The Chair also noted the interest in what could be termed a stocktake or knowledge-base of existing expertise and experiences in relation to border capabilities of economies and suggested that the APEC Secretariat be able to offer advice in this regard in terms of the experience of other subfora who may have developed similar tools/work.
- 14.10 Thailand also noted that many of the capabilities in the Model have been individually studied within BMG already, for example study on ABCS, API/PNR and biometrics and echoed the Chair's comments in relation to the idea of developing of a knowledge-base of existing expertise and working with the APEC Secretariat, so that all economies can refer to the information when looking at developing particularly capabilities, practices. Thailand recommended identifying a number of key capabilities, including those BMG have already started working on, which could be included initially in this knowledge base.
- 14.11 The Chair noted this was good idea and would be complex and the United States may wish to have assistance from other economies in this regard.
- 14.12 Canada noted it had recently undergone a border modernisation review, looking at capabilities such as API, PNR, entry/exit, biometrics as well as trusted travellers and noted it was an interesting exercise to go through. Canada noted that as you build these programs, it is then important to look at the connectivity between them and where there are efficiencies. Canada advised that if the United States needed as assistance in next steps, Canada could assist.
- 14.13 The Chair noted Canada's important point that it is not just the capabilities but the vision and architecture of the border that is also useful for economies.
- 14.14 The United States clarified in terms of next steps that they will take these ideas to the TFI Steering Committee as agreed earlier today and report back intersessionally on whether it will fit there or elsewhere. The United States also clarified that if it did not sit under the TFI it would consider it further given the importance of the Border Capabilities Model to the BMG.
- 14.15 Action item: once views of TFI Steering Committee are known in regards to action item 5.8) on whether the TFI would be the appropriate forum to incorporate a border capability mechanism and corresponding capacity development opportunities, the United States will report back on the findings to the BMG.

## **15. Extending the Validity of the ABTC (Australia)**

- 15.1 The Chair invited Australia to present on the agenda item to provide an update on the status of the proposal to extend the validity of the ABTC from three to five years.
- 15.2 Australia noted the background to the issue, noting that the BMG had been considering the proposal for some time, following the suggestion of ABAC. Australia noted that the idea of this proposal had been to reduce transaction costs for business travellers and also provide processing efficiencies for economies, allowing economies to better manage growth in the ABTC Scheme.
- 15.3 Australia noted that there had been support for this proposal from many economies, however, in considering the detail of this proposal, other economies noted that there are still certain issues that the BMG should first consider; including integrity issues given the circumstances of a business traveller may change a lot over 5 years. This in turn gave rise to the possibility of 're-vetting' a cardholder periodically, but then this could undo the value of extending the card in the first place. Alternatively, Australia noted that some economies had suggested if further information was collected upfront in the ABTC application this could alleviate the need for any 're-vetting'. There was also some consideration around the issue of the visas that underpins the ABTC. The Thailand and Australian-led survey on ABTC visa policy and regulatory settings could consider this issue.
- 15.4 Australia noted another issue that had been raised was the handling passport changes, given an increased validity period would result cardholders more likely needing to change passports during the life of an ABTC.
- 15.5 The ABTC Working Group has been considering this issue. Australia recalled the background to this issue, advising that the existing functionality in the ABTC System to advise of passport

changes of ABTC holders could be enhanced to ensure that a home economy is notified once a foreign pre-clearance economy has actioned a change. This would ensure a home economy does not issue the new card until the other economies have updated their systems with the new passport details, if applicable. Nonetheless, the ABTC Working Group has noted that such a process would need to be actioned quickly, otherwise it would defeat the purpose of a streamlined way of handling passport changes and might not be any quicker than a traveller applying for a new ABTC.

- 15.6 Australia recommended therefore that given that these issues require further consideration and many of which will be very relevant for the End to End Review, it would be best to defer final decision on this proposal until those issues have been resolved.
- 15.7 Malaysia renewed its full support for the proposed extension of the ABTC validity from three to five years and thanked Australia for its comprehensive analysis of the proposal. Malaysia supports five years given the views of ABTC holders and the fact that there did not appear to be a strong justification against the proposal. Malaysian noted the benefits of the proposal, in reducing workloads and allowing economies to manage growth – noting five years would be an ideal period.
- 15.8 Singapore supported the proposed way forward, namely for the ABTC Working Group to first consider any smaller issues and the End to End Review to consider the longer-term issues. For the short-term issues, Singapore noted its concerns in relation to the proposed enhancing of the ABTC System for the handling passport changes. Singapore supported ABAC's earlier comments that the issue of extending the validity is of secondary importance to the issue of reducing processing times.
- 15.9 Canada noted the opportunity to look at the longer-term issue as part of the End to End Review, and noted that Canada could support a move to a five year validity, however, for the Canadian pilot, Canada is looking at using their existing regulatory framework to conduct the pilot and regulatory changes would be required if there was a move to five years.
- 15.10 Vietnam fully supported the proposal to extend the validity to five years and hoped that there would soon be agreement of all economies to the proposal.
- 15.11 China noted its strong support for the proposal to extend the validity to five years. China also raised another issue and hoped that each economy could not the exact date of the visa pre-clearance expiry when they approve a pre-clearance in the ABTC System. China noted it had raised this issue at the last SOM and noted that China does specific the exact date when granting pre-clearance.
- 15.12 Russia noted its agreement with the proposed extension but also noted that the BMG should be mindful of the risks, given what could change in relation to a business traveller within five years including passport changes.
- 15.13 Australia noted China's comments in terms of the date of pre-clearance expiry being recorded in the ABTC System and suggested that this issue could be considered as part of the Thailand and Australian survey on ABTC visa policy and regulatory settings, noting that there are differences between economies in terms of whether visas are granted in some economies, and whether there is an expiry date.
- 15.14 The United States also advised of its support for the proposed extension of the ABTC and queried the best way for the BMG to confirm which short-term issues are to be considered by the ABTC Working Group; and which long-term issues are to be considered by the End to End Review.
- 15.15 Australia clarified that the key short-term issues was the handling of passport changes, and noted that this is currently being considered by the ABTC Working Group. Australia also noted that the longer-term issues that have been raised (for example, the risk concerns and visa settings) could be considered as part of the End to End Review.
- 15.16 The Chair noted economies' comments and that the notification of passport change issue was something that would need to be progressed irrespective of this proposal and the End to End Review and should still be considered as an immediate stand-alone issue to be resolved.

- 15.17 New Zealand noted that the End to End Review would be the vehicle for making all of these changes to improve the ABTC process, in an ideal world. However, the reality is that some issues already identified could be resolved reasonably quickly as an interim improvement before the End to End Review is completed, for example, the handling passport change issue. Nonetheless, noted the End to End Review should still be completed as quickly as possible to look at all of these interrelated issues holistically.
- 15.18 Australia agreed and noted that the issues like the passport change issue should still be advanced as quickly possible and need not wait until the review has been commenced or finalised.
- 15.19 The Chair then noted that it appeared the BMG was agreed that economies collectively work intersessionally with the ABTC Working Group's consideration of the handling passport change issue ahead of the review. The Chair also then provided some additional background to the proposed enhancement of the ABTC System to better handle passport changes of ABTC holder, noting it can only benefit the holder if all economies can action the passport changes quickly.
- 15.20 Thailand agreed with Singapore and Australia of the urgency of the passport change issue and that it be considered as soon as possible. Thailand saw this as a two issues: firstly the technical change in the ABTC System; and secondly, the procedure and timeframe for actioning, and whether this standard should be in the client service standards.
- 15.21 Papua New Guinea noted that while they were not the immigration representatives, but noted that given some of PNG's current processing times are slow, there may be concerns if there are additional client service standards and would provide advice from the relevant PNG representatives.
- 15.22 The Chair noted the comments of economies and for the agreement for the passport change issue to be advanced by Australia intersessionally, and noted that economies may wish to discuss options bilaterally with Australia in terms of what can reasonably incorporated in the proposal as it moves forward.
- 15.22 Action item: Australia to advance the ABTC Working Group proposal in relation to handling passport changes in the ABTC System intersessionally, ahead of the End to End Review.

## **16. APEC Project: End to End Review of the ABTC Scheme (Australia)**

- 16.1 The Chair noted Australia's work on progressing an APEC Project concept note to begin an End to End Review of the ABTC Scheme. The Chair invited Australia to provide further updates on the progress of the project funding bid. The Chair also invited the APEC Secretariat to provide an update on the funding arrangements.
- 16.2 Australia noted it had been progressing an APEC Project Concept Note, in line with the BMG's discussions during SOM1 in Jakarta, to seek APEC funding to undertake an End to End review of the ABTC Scheme. Australia thanked those economies for their input in the formative stages of the concept.
- 16.3 Australia noted the concept note was lodged with the APEC Budget Management Committee (BMC) through the APEC Secretariat on 16 May 2013. Australia thanked the APEC Secretariat for its assistance and valuable input. Australia noted that while the BMG will not know until 4 July 2013 whether the End to End review project proposal will be successful in this project round, the BMG workshop tomorrow will be utilised as a valuable opportunity for economies to provide their initial input to the areas that the project should direct its focus.
- 16.4 Australia also noted that it was important and useful for more co-sponsors in addition to the two so far (Thailand and New Zealand) to assist in the next steps of the project as it progresses (it was not too late), noting some economies had already advised that they would consider this.
- 16.5 Australia stressed that should the project successful in its funding bid, a full project proposal will need to be submitted by 12 August 2013 at the latest. As the majority of consultation for economy participation will be undertaken intersessionally, Australia stressed the importance that economies raise their suggestions, input or concerns as soon as they are able to ensure that they are taken into account as part of the full project proposal.

- 16.6 Australia recommended that the BMG note the final concept note and recognise the importance of the proposed project to the future of the ABTC Scheme and also acknowledge the importance of each economy providing input to ensure its requirements are addressed as part of the review.
- 16.7 Australia also recommended that each economy consider its current environment and the focus questions in the paper ahead of the discussion at tomorrow's workshop.
- 16.8 Australia also noted some of the issues that had been flagged to date for inclusion in the full scope of the project, including: passport change system enhancement; ABTC system integration; online lodgement opportunities; and the stability and usability of the ABTC System.
- 16.9 Australia invited any comments on the project and noted there would also be an opportunity to discuss at the workshop tomorrow and invited the APEC Secretariat for an update.
- 16.10 The APEC Secretariat advised that the projects are being considered against the appropriate funds to maximise the use of the funds. The APEC Secretariat advised that the BMG project was currently being considered for the TFAP II fund.
- 16.11 The Chair looked forward to the formal advice on the project funding outcome. The Chair noted that the project is a significant strategic opportunity in terms of the scope of the project and the importance of all economies thinking in this regard, including their vision for the future of the Scheme. The Chair also noted some of the suggestions to date, including information collected as part of the ABTC Scheme and whether it was sufficient. The Chair noted therefore that there might be opportunities to consider Framework issues and not just business process matters. The Chair noted the workshop would be a good opportunity to discuss these but also invited comments today, given not all economies would be able to attend the workshop.
- 16.12 New Zealand thanked Australia for the work to date and noted New Zealand had commenced its own thinking on possible enhancements to the Scheme and its business processes and looked forward to providing its input. New Zealand emphasised the need for free and frank discussion for tomorrow's workshop.

**17. Other Business (Chair)**

- 17.1 The Chair invited economies to raise any other matters.
- 17.2 Australia noted the concerns that all economies have experienced in relation to the stability and performance of the ABTC System and regretted the inconvenience caused to economies' ABTC processing teams. Australia proposed a report on the performance of the system and what steps are being taken to rectify the issue being provided to the BMG.
- 17.3 Additionally, Australia updated the BMG on the Australian project to move the hosting of the ABTC System from servers in their current location (Sydney) with an external technical provider to Canberra (on Australian Immigration's data centre) as part of an internal Australian Immigration enterprise-wide IT change to consolidate data servers.
- 17.3 Australia noted the proposed move should have no significant impact on economy access to the ABTC system. It is believed that the move should result in new hardware and therefore improved system performance and stability. The move was planned for 30 June 2013, but has been moved to 30 September 2013 and Australia will provide on advice on any scheduled outages as part of the move keep the BMG informed and also be in contact should there be any testing required by economies and also should there be any other importance pieces of information that users required, including any information on log-in details being updated.
- 17.4 Action item: Australia to advise the BMG intersessionally on the transition of ABTC System servers and to contact economies should important information be required for users of the ABTC System.
- 17.5 Action item: Australia to provide a report intersessionally on the ABTC System outages experienced and any steps taken to improve performance.

- 17.6 Peru raised the issue of the transitional membership changes to the ABTC Operating Framework. The Chair noted that the text had been agreed intersessionally following the in principle agreement at SOM1 in Jakarta.
- 17.7 Peru asked whether it may be provide its comments on the text intersessionally. The Chair clarified that the BMG had already made a decision at SOM1 to amend the Framework and the BMG had agreed to the text intersessionally, which reflected this decision. The Chair noted that if an economy wished to make new changes to the ABTC Operating Framework, it would require a fresh proposal to make new amendments.
- 17.8 The APEC Secretariat noted the importance of transparency in APEC decision-making by subfora and encouraged decisions to be made at APEC meetings to assist in locating documents and confirming consensus.
- 17.9 Peru noted that if there were further comments, Peru would provide it intersessionally. Peru then enquired as to when the intersessional agreement on the text occurred. The Chair invited Australia to comment.
- 17.10 Australia noted that following the SOM in Jakarta, the draft text was circulated to all BMG members for economies comment in February/March 2013. Australia noted that the United States received technical comments from many economies on the text. The proposal was then re-circulated to all economies for any final comment and there were no further concerns raised.
- 17.11 New Zealand also offered some background to the decision at SOM, noting the wide-spread agreement in principle to remove the temporary nature of the transitional membership in the Framework at the time and New Zealand's suggestion at the time for there to be some minor intersessional discussion to finalise the exact text, noting the wording should express the commitment to meet all the principles of membership. This was then worked on intersessionally by New Zealand and United States and it was then distributed to all economies for comment.
- 17.12 To provide transparency, the Chair proposed that Australia provide a chronology of the agreement and intersessional discussions to finalise the text to amend the ABTC Operating Framework. The Chair also invited the APEC Secretariat and/or Australia to guide Peru on the process should it wish to propose further changes to the ABTC Operating Framework. Alternatively, if there were just minor technical changes suggested by Peru, the Chair would be happy to discuss this with the APEC Secretariat on how these could be considered.
- 17.13 Action item: Australia to provide a chronology of the agreement and intersessional discussions undertaken to finalise the text to amend the ABTC Operating Framework's transitional membership category to BMG members for their information.
- 17.14 Action item: Peru to seek advice from APEC Secretariat/Australia should Peru wish to propose further changes to the ABTC Operating Framework.
- 17.15 The Chair then raised the issue of data entry quality, noting some economies experience difficulties in progressing ABTC pre-clearance requests that contain data errors, incorrect dates of birth or other typographical errors. The Chair encouraged all economies to ensure that there is attention to detail and the appropriate format is used in the ABTC System for pre-clearance requests.
- 17.16 The Chair also raised the issue of program reporting and thanked Australia for its agreement to provide further information on the stability of the ABTC System. The Chair noted her interest in having program management information in relation to ABTC Program more broadly and expressed her interest in exploring intersessionally the possibility of having high-level program reporting for the ABTC Scheme. The Chair also noted the importance of each economy having their own program reporting of their participation in the ABTC Scheme and the benefits it can provide. The Chair looked forward to any suggestions from economies in terms of specific reporting elements would be of interest at a Scheme-level.
- 17.17 Action item: Chair to seek economies' views on elements for an ABTC Program Report intersessionally.

**18. Dates of Next Meeting (Chair)**

- 18.1 The Chair noted that China would be the host economy in 2014 and invited the Program Director to provide any update.
- 18.2 The Program Director advised the standard procedure is to wait for the host economy to form a national organising committee and from there will be discussion and consultation on dates for next year. The Program Director noted it has been suggested that CTI subfora now keep to two meetings per year.
- 18.3 The Program Director also confirmed with economies that meeting documents for this meeting were restricted and not for public release (except for the agenda document).
- 18.4 The Chair also reminded economies of the BMG Workshop to be held the following day, which would look at in more detail the proposed scope for the APEC Project for an End to End Review of the ABTC Scheme.

**Meeting closed.**